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the side opposite the polishing surface so that the aperture is substantially free of a window, the aperture positioned on the belt to allow monitoring of the workpiece through the aperture.

REMARKS

Claim 1 has been rewritten. The attached Appendix indicates the changes, with additions underlined and deletions indicated by brackets.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claim 1 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by Dudovicz et al. (WO 99/06182). Claims 2-7 were rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dudovicz et al.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections and request reconsideration of claim 1-7, including independent claim 1. Independent claim 1 requires that an aperture from the polishing surface to the opposite side is positioned on the belt to allow monitoring of the workpiece through the aperture.

Dudovicz et al. do not suggest this limitation. Dudovicz et al. disclose a fabric belt coated with a polymer to form a seamless polishing surface (page 4, lines 1-3). Holes may extend through the belt from the top surface to the bottom surface (page 8, lines 1-3). Dudovicz et al. do not suggest that a window is or is not included in the holes, but the sentence prior to the disclosure of holes suggests transparent areas (page 7, line 20-page 8, line 1). No purpose suggesting a position is given for the holes, as opposed to providing grooves to distribute and remove slurry and particles (page 8, lines 3-7). In addition to no purpose, Dudovicz et al. do not disclose any position, number, size or other characteristic of the holes, only that holes may exist from the top to bottom. With no position or other characteristic provided by Dudovicz et al., the suggestion of holes likely merely allows for manufacturing flaws or the common in the art placement of transparent windows. Dudovicz et al. do not discuss detecting the surface of the wafer or other end-point detection, so there is no suggestion to use a windowless aperture for such detection. Dudovicz et al. do not suggest an aperture positioned on the belt to allow monitoring of the workpiece through the aperture.

Claims 2-7 depend from claim 1, so are allowable for the reasons discussed above. Further limitations of dependent claims 2-7 are not obvious from the suggestions of Dudovicz et al. The general suggestion of holes by Dudovicz et al., especially with no purpose or other characteristic

disclosed, would not have suggested: centering the aperture as claimed in claim 2; three apertures as claimed in claims 4 and 5; and a notch or trigger aperture positioned relative to the aperture as claimed in claims 6 and 7. There is no suggestion to one of ordinary skill in the art of the number of holes, the position of the holes or any relative notches or apertures. Dudovicz et al. merely disclose holes, suggesting either random holes, holes due to flaws in manufacturing or holes used for positioning a window as was common in the art. By not providing further characteristics of or purpose for the holes, Dudovicz et al. do not suggest limitations of claims 1-7.

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance and seeks early allowance thereof. If for any reason, the Examiner is unable to allow the application in the next Office Action and believes that an interview would be helpful to resolve any remaining issues, he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorneys at (312) 321-4200.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX

1. (amended) A belt comprising (a) a polishing surface for polishing a workpiece in a chemical mechanical linear polishing system and (b) a side opposite the polishing surface, the belt forming an endless loop, an improvement comprising at least one aperture from the polishing surface through the side opposite the polishing surface [through the belt] so that the aperture is substantially free of a window, the aperture positioned on the belt to allow monitoring of the workpiece through the aperture.